

PCB announces PSL prize money, auction plan for new teams

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Friday announced a new reward for franchises in the upcoming HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) edition set to be held in April 2026.

“Complementing the Pakistan Super League’s growth, I am thrilled to announce a new reward for franchises in the forthcoming [PSL] editions,” Mohsin said on X.

The champions will take home \$500,000 — the same as the 2025 edition — while the runners-up will earn \$300,000, which is an increase of the previous year’s \$200,000 reward.

Additionally, a \$200,000 reward will be given to the best franchise contributing towards cricket development.

Separately, the PCB announced on Friday that the auction for the two new PSL franchise teams will take place on Jan 6, 2026, while the decision for which cities have been shortlisted will be made after Dec 15.

“This marks a significant milestone in the league’s continued expansion and its commitment to expanding its footprint across Pakistan,” the PCB said of the development.

“The addition of two new teams will also create fresh commercial, sporting and fan engagement opportunities.”

PSL, which began in 2016 with five teams, expanded to six franchises with the addition of Multan Sultans in 2018. The inclusion of two more sides would mark its first major restructuring in seven years and push the total number of teams to eight.

The names of the cities from which two are to be added to PSL include Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Hyderabad, Sialkot, Muzaffarabad and Gilgit.

“The successful bidders at the auction will have the right to choose from amongst these city/team names. Only technically qualified bidders will be invited to the Auction,” the PCB statement said.

“The PSL, now recognised as one of the premier T20 leagues globally, continues to grow in stature, commercial strength and fan following. The PCB and PSL management look forward to welcoming new stakeholders to the PSL ecosystem and to further elevating the league’s impact on Pakistan cricket,” it concluded.

Nortje returns to South Africa T20 squad for India series

CAPE TOWN: South Africa fast bowler Anrich Nortje has been named in their Twenty20 International squad for the five-match series against India next month, the first time he will have played for the side since the 2024 T20 World Cup final.

The 32-year-old has overcome a succession of injuries and returned to domestic action, proving his fitness for the series in India.

His presence will in part make up for the injury absence of fast bowler Kagiso Rabada, who has been ruled out for four weeks with a rib problem.

“We know exactly what he [Nortje] brings so we were really looking forward to working with him,” South Africa coach Shukri Conrad said.

“Of course we’ll miss KG [Rabada] on this tour, but as we saw in the first test win over India, this group has depth and that is one of our primary goals as a squad, to develop a unit filled with players who can step up at any time.”

South Africa also named a squad for the three-match One-day International series that will be played ahead of the T20s.

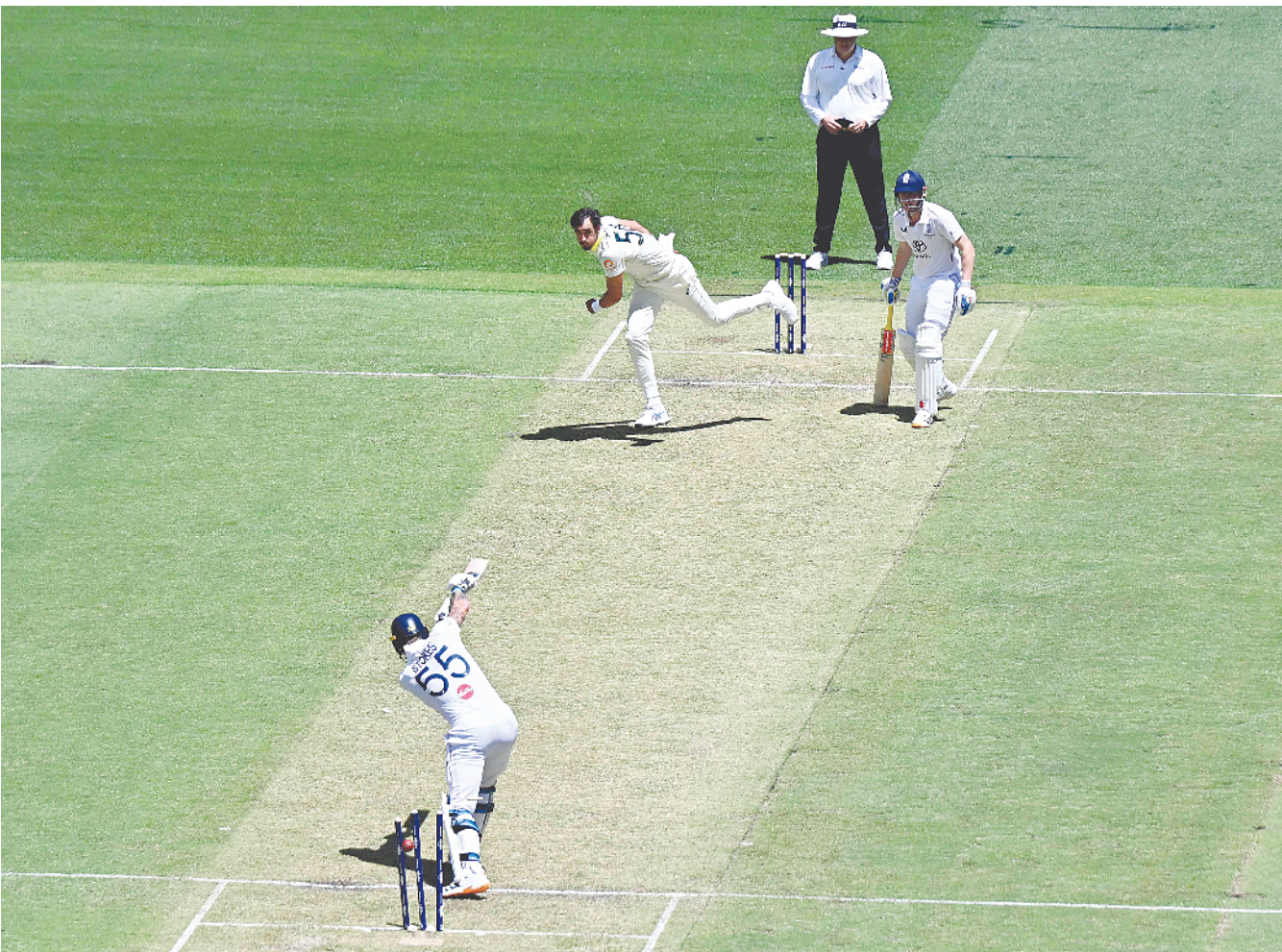
It contains many of the same players who did duty on the recent tour of Pakistan, with experienced wicket-keeper-batter Quinton de Kock selected for both the ODI and T20 squads.

The ODI series will be played from Nov 30 to Dec 6, with the five T20s from Dec 9-19.

The teams complete their test series with a second and final fixture that starts on Saturday.

ODI squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), Osneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Matthew Breetzke, Dewald Brevis, Nandre Burger, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Rubin Hermann, Keshav Maharaj, Marco Jansen, Aiden Markram, Lungi Ngidi, Ryan Rickelton, Prenelan Subrayen.

T20 squad: Aiden Markram (captain), Otneil Baartman, Corbin Bosch, Dewald Brevis, Quinton de Kock, Tony de Zorzi, Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, George Linde, Kwená Maphaka, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Tristan Stubbs.—Reuters



AUSTRALIAN pacer Mitchell Starc cleans up England captain Ben Stokes during the first Ashes Test at the Perth Stadium on Friday.—AFP

Carnage as 19 wickets fall on opening day of first Ashes Test

PERTH: Nineteen wickets fell on an opening day of carnage in the first Ashes Test on Friday, with England’s fearsome attack led by skipper Ben Stokes bowling them into a position of strength after Australia dismissed the tourists for 172.

A rampaging Mitchell Starc took 7-58 to put England on the back foot after Stokes won the toss on a fine day at a packed Perth Stadium and chose to bat.

Harry Brook (52) and Ollie Pope (46) offered the only resistance as they crumbled after lunch.

But England’s elite fast bowlers, led by an exceptional Stokes with 5-23, fought back to reduce the hosts to 123-9 at stumps, trailing by 49.

Nathan Lyon was on three with Brendan Doggett yet to score.

“What a day,” England bowler Brydon Carse, who took two wickets including Steve Smith, told broadcasters.

“I think everyone that’s come today has got their time’s worth — 19 wickets.

“Fantastic last session from everyone to put us in a strong position heading into tomorrow.”

In a brutal introduction to Test cricket, opener Jake Weatherald went for a second-ball duck, left on the floor by a Jofra Archer bullet and given out lbw.

Marnus Labuschagne fended off 41 balls for nine before he

Scoreboard	
ENGLAND (1st Innings):	AUSTRALIA (1st Innings):
Z. Crawley c Khawaja b Starc.....0	J. Weatherald lbw Archer.....0
B. Duckett lbw Starc.....21	M. Labuschagne b Archer.....9
O. Pope lbw Green.....46	S. Smith c Brook b Carse.....17
J. Root c Labuschagne b Starc.....0	U. Khawaja c Smith b Carse.....2
H. Brook c Carey b Doggett.....52	T. Head c Carse b Stokes.....21
B. Stokes b Starc.....6	C. Green c Smith b Stokes.....26
J. Smith c Green b Starc.....33	A. Carey c Carse b Stokes.....24
G. Atkinson c Smith b Starc.....1	M. Starc c Carse b Stokes.....12
B. Carse c Labuschagne b Doggett.....6	N. Lyon not out.....3
J. Archer not out.....0	S. Boland c Brook b Stokes.....0
M. Wood c Carey b Starc.....0	B. Doggett not out.....0
EXTRAS (LB-5, NB-2).....7	EXTRAS (LB-7, NB-2).....9
TOTAL (all out, 32.5 overs).....172	TOTAL (for nine wickets, 39 overs).....123
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0 (Crawley), 2-33 (Duckett), 3-39 (Root), 4-94 (Pope), 5-115 (Stokes), 6-160 (Brook), 7-161 (Atkinson), 8-168 (Carse), 9-172 (Smith)	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-0 (Weatherald), 2-28 (Labuschagne), 3-30 (Smith), 4-31 (Khawaja), 5-76 (Head), 6-83 (Green), 7-118 (Starc), 8-121 (Carey), 9-121 (Boland)
BOWLING: Starc 12.5-4-58-7, Boland 10-0-62-0 (2nb), Doggett 7-1-27-2, Lyon 2-0-10-0, Green 1-0-10-1	BOWLING: Archer 9-4-11-2, Atkinson 9-4-19-0, Wood 5-0-18-0 (1nb), Carse 10-1-45-2 (1nb), Stokes 6-1-23-5

too succumbed to the sheer speed of Archer, bowled by a fuller delivery.

And when Smith fell for 17 to Carse in the next over, caught by Brook at slip, it was game on.

Usman Khawaja, who was feeling stiff so did not open, came in at four but lasted just six balls, blown away by a Carse bouncer that took a nick to wicket-keeper Jamie Smith, leaving Australia reeling at 31-4.

Cameron Green (24), Travis Head (21), Alex Carey (26) and Starc (12) all got starts, but in a reflection of the depth of England’s pace stocks, Stokes removed them when he brought himself on.

“He’s amazing. His character, his resilience is everything this team strives to be,” Carse said of the skipper. “A game-changing spell from him in that session.”

Starc, who recorded his career-best figures in an innings, had bagged three wickets in an intimidating opening spell, including Joe Root for a duck, before returning to send Stokes packing in his first over after the lunch break, then mopping up.

All five previous Tests at the Perth venue have been won by the side batting first, but England did their best to challenge that, getting off to a horror start.

Veteran strike weapon Starc delivered as he has so many times before, enticing a thick edge from Zak Crawley on his sixth ball that

Khawaja did well to collect low at slip, the opener gone for nought.

Starc has now taken a wicket in the first over of an innings 24 times.

At the other end Ben Duckett settled his nerves with a textbook drive off Scott Boland to bank the first four of the series.

But just as he was getting going, Starc pounced again, trapping him lbw for 21 to leave England tottering on 33-2.

That brought Root to the crease in his latest campaign for an elusive first century in Australia.

He only lasted seven balls, edging a seaming delivery into the safe hands of Labuschagne at third slip.

Pope survived the furnace and was composed before Green came on and he was out lbw, leaving the visitors on 105-4 at lunch.

Brook hit Scott Boland for a six in the first over after the break before Starc again worked his magic, taking out Stokes’s stumps with an inswinger when the captain was on six.

A fearless Brook raced to his 14th Test half-century before feathering a short ball to Carey, earning Doggett his maiden Test wicket on debut.

Starc removed Gus Atkinson cheaply to give him the 17th five-wicket haul of his career and with Doggett they ruthlessly cleaned up the tail.—AFP

Shaheens edge SL ‘A’ to make final

DOHA: Ghazi Ghori’s solid batting backed by Sufiyan Mugeem’s spin and all-round show from Saad Masood steered Pakistan Shaheens to a thrilling five-run victory over Sri Lanka ‘A’ in the semi-final of the Asia Cup Rising Stars Championship here at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium on Friday.

The Irfan Khan-led Pakistan now face Bangladesh ‘A’ in the final on Sunday.

Sri Lanka started the 154-run chase aggressively hammering 29 runs in the first two overs, fuelled by Lasith Croosspulle’s explosive 27 from seven balls. Shahid Aziz halted the early onslaught by removing the right-hander in the second over.

Vishen Halambage then attempted to stabilise the innings, as he stitched useful partnerships with Nishan Madushka and Nuwanidu Fernando. But his dismissal by Sufiyan for 29 triggered a collapse. Sri Lanka ‘A’ tumbled from 70-3 to 99-8 in just over five overs.

Milan Rathnayake kept the contest alive with a fighting 40 off 32 balls. Sri Lanka ‘A’ needed eight off the final four deliveries but the Pakistan bowlers held their nerve to restrict them to 148-9.

Sufiyan and Saad took three wickets each while Ahmed Danyal, Shahid Aziz and Ubaid Shah claimed one apiece.

Earlier after being sent in to bat, Shaheens posted a fighting 153-9 off the stipulated overs thanks to Ghazi’s responsible batting.

Wicket-keeper/batter Ghazi top-scored with an unbeaten 39 off 36 laced with two fours and one six. Maaz Sadaqat contributed 23 off 11, hitting two fours and two huge sixes. Ahmed Danyal and Saad contributed 22 runs each, while Mohammad Naeeem made 16.

For Sri Lanka, Pramod Madushan picked up four wickets and Traveen Mathew three, while Dunith Wellalage and Milan Rathnayake took one wicket each.—Agencies

Hasan joins Pakistan squad

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan cricketers participated in a comprehensive practice session here at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium under lights on Friday ahead of their T20 International tri-nation series clash against Sri Lanka.

The squad practised in the nets and also took part in physical drills under the supervision of the coaching staff led by head coach Mike Hesson.

Pakistan’s young batter Hasan Nawaz, who was brought back to the national squad in place of injured Abdul Samad, also took part in practice.

Pakistan face under-pressure Sri Lanka who faced a massive 67-run defeat at the hands of Zimbabwe on Thursday.

The Sikandar Raza-captained Zimbabwe gave tough time to Pakistan also in the tri-nation series opener which the Salman Ali Agha-led side won by five wickets in the final over as they chased 148.—Sports Reporter

West Indies recall veteran pacer Roach for NZ Test tour

PORT OF SPAIN: West Indies recalled veteran fast bowler Kemar Roach to spearhead their attack which is missing two key bowlers for their three-Test tour of New Zealand next month as the cricket board (CWI) announced a 15-man squad on Thursday.

With both Shamar Joseph and Alzarri Joseph sidelined by injuries, the squad features an intriguing blend of experience and fresh blood, including a maiden call-up for Ojay Shields.

The 29-year-old fast bowler will get his first taste of international cricket on the notoriously challenging New Zealand pitches.

Roach has not played a Test since January but the 37-year-

old is an experienced campaigner with 85 Tests and 284 wickets, and he was called up with an eye on the playing surfaces which are expected to favour the fast bowlers.

New Zealand has traditionally been one of the toughest places for any touring side, which is why strong emphasis has been placed on targeted preparation,” CWIs director

of cricket, Miles Bascombe, said.

“The recent high-performance camp here in Antigua was designed to replicate, as closely as possible, the conditions we expect to face, particularly the pace-friendly surfaces.”

Middle-order batter Kavem Hodge returns to the Test squad but there was no room

for Kary Pierre with spin bowling expected to play a limited role in the series.

The tour spans Dec 1-21 across Christchurch, Wellington and Mount Maunganui and the series forms part of the 2025-27 ICC World Test Championship, where West Indies are bottom of the standings after five Tests while New Zealand have

yet to play a series.

Squad: Roston Chase (captain), Jomel Warrican (vice-captain), Alick Athanaze, John Campbell, Tagenarine Chanderpaul, Justin Greaves, Kavem Hodge, Shai Hope, Tevin Imlach, Brandon King, Johann Layne, Anderson Phillip, Kemar Roach, Jayden Seales, Ojay Shields.—Reuters

Injured Gill out of must-win second South Africa Test

GUWAHATI: India skipper Shubman Gill will miss the must-win second Test against South Africa on Saturday because of the neck injury he sustained in the opening match.

The hosts will be led by wicket-keeper and deputy Rishabh Pant in

Match starts at 8:30am (PST)

Guwahati as they attempt to rescue the two-Test series.

“He is doing fine, he is getting better,” Pant said on Friday of Gill. “He was keen on playing this Test match but his body didn’t allow it.”

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said Gill “will head to Mumbai for further assessment of his injury”.

The right-hand batter Gill suffered neck spasms in the first innings of the opening Test and pulled out of the remainder of the match, spending a night in hospital.

He travelled with the team to Guwahati but was forced out as the

medical staff believed playing him would risk aggravating the injury.

“From a captaincy point of view, when you see his resilience that even when your body is not supporting, but you want to push it for your team, that’s the kind of mindset we want to inculcate and he did it from the front,” said Pant.

Top-order batter Sai Sudharsan is expected to replace Gill in the team, which will be announced at the toss.

India lost a low-scoring opener after they were bowled out for 93 in a chase of 124 at Kolkata’s Eden Gardens.

It was India’s fourth Test defeat in six matches at home after New Zealand registered a rare 3-0 white-wash on Indian soil last year.

“It’s been a tough Test match, the last one, and coming out of it we just want to do whatever is required to win this Test match,” said Pant.

A flamboyant left-hand batter, Pant returned to India’s squad for the South Africa Tests after missing the home series against the West Indies



SOUTH African captain Temba Bavuma speaks during a news conference at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium on Friday.—AFP

last month as he recovered from a foot fracture.

The deputy captain said: “One-off matches is not the best scenario as a captain... but whenever you are leading your country it is the proudest moment especially in Test cricket.

“At the same time I don’t want to think about it too much. I do not want to take that undue pressure of captaincy in my mind.”

The Kolkata pitch drew criticism — it had turn and inconsistent bounce, the Test ending inside three days.

The best individual score was South African skipper Temba Bavuma’s unbeaten 55 in the second innings.

“This wicket will play better. Definitely it is a better wicket to bat on,” said Pant.

“Obviously it will eventually turn after a few days but it is going to be a good contest.”

RABADA OUT BUT SA ‘BUOYANT’

Meanwhile, South African pacer Kagiso Rabada was also ruled out from the second Test due to the ongoing rib injury injury.

But South African skipper Temba Bavuma struck a confident tone despite the fast bowler’s absence.

South Africa are chasing a first series win on Indian soil since Hansie Cronje’s team triumphed there in 2000 and they must again do without Rabada, who also missed the victory in Kolkata.

“Lungi Ngidi has been added. In terms of starting XI we will finalise that tomorrow once we take one last look at the wicket,” Bavuma said on Friday.

“The mood is buoyant amongst the boys,” Bavuma said.

“We’re excited to try and replicate our performances as we did in the first Test.” He added: “Everyone is looking forward to it, looking at where the series is at, the whole narrative around it all. “We’ll just try and make sure that we lock in for the next five days.”

South Africa beat India at their own game of spin in Kolkata on a turning pitch with uneven bounce.

Pundits slammed the track, where South African spinner Simon Harmer returned match figures of 8-51.

Bavuma made a best individual

score of 55.

“I think it will be a more traditional sub-continent wicket,” Bavuma said of the Guwahati strip.

“Good for batting the first two days and then day three the spinners should come into play.

“So I think all the fundamentals that come with playing in the sub-continent, first innings becomes crucial from a batting point of view to really set the game up.”

South Africa beat Australia to win the World Test Championship final in June at Lord’s and recently drew 1-1 in Pakistan.

Bavuma said a two-match series is not ideal in a bilateral contest.

“Look, however way the series goes, 1-1, 2-0, you know, it would be nice for a three-four match series against a formidable team like India,” said Bavuma.

“We woke up this morning to watch the Ashes and we watched with a little bit of jealousy knowing that they were 5-5 Tests, they’ll be going at each other.”—AFP